

Standard 8-6: The student will demonstrate an understanding of South Carolina's development during the early twentieth century.

8-6.3 Summarize the political, social, and economic situation in South Carolina following World War I, including progress in suffrage for women, improvements in daily life in urban and rural areas, and changes in agriculture and industry. (H, G, P, E)

Taxonomy Level: B 2 Understand / Conceptual Knowledge

Previous/future knowledge:

In 5th grade, students summarized changes in daily life in the boom period of the 1920s, including the improved standard of living; the popularity of new technology such as automobiles, airplanes, radio, and movies; the Harlem Renaissance and the Great Migration; Prohibition; and racial and ethnic conflict. (5-4.1)

In United States history students will explain the social, cultural, and economic effects of scientific innovation and consumer financing options in the 1920s on the United States and the world, including the advent of aviation, the expansion of mass production techniques, the invention of new home appliances, and the role of transportation in changing urban life (USHC 7.1).

It is essential for students to know:

During World War I, women suffragettes employed more assertive tactics in their campaign to get the **right to vote**. However, women were not successful until political leaders, including President Wilson, recognized women's contributions to the war effort by supporting a suffrage amendment to the Constitution. The 19th Amendment was passed by Congress and sent to the states for ratification. Although the South Carolina legislature did not ratify the amendment, South Carolina women got the right to vote because of ratification by other states. However, this did not bring about any radical political change since women tended to vote as their husbands did.

Some social change came as the result of improvements in urban life because of new technologies. However, there was little change for the rural farmer. Water and sanitation systems were built in towns and cities of South Carolina. Because of trolley systems and the automobile, some people moved to suburbs on the outskirts of cities such as Columbia. Electricity became more available to people in towns and cities as the result of the harnessing of water power through the building of dams along South Carolina's rivers, including the dam that formed Lake Murray. Improvements in daily life were the result of greater availability of electricity and the new appliances that used it. Some South Carolinians bought automobiles, vacuum cleaners and washing machines on the installment plan, just as people did throughout the United States. In 1930, the first radio station in South Carolina went on the air in Charleston and provided entertainment and news to those who could afford it. Although, appliances eased the workload of housewives, few South Carolina women joined the ranks of the flappers. South Carolina society continued to be stratified, sexist and segregated.

Economic change resulted from the prosperity brought by the war years. During the war, farmers' economic conditions improved because of increased demand for their products. This had a ripple effect on the rest of the agriculturally based South Carolina economy. Bankers and merchants as well as landowners, sharecroppers and tenant farmers shared in the good times and went on a spending spree. However this prosperity did not last and soon cotton and tobacco prices fell as a result of overproduction and the loss of overseas markets.

Changes in industry were the result of investment by Northern capitalists attracted by wartime profits and the availability of cheap labor as white workers left the farm for the factory. The textile industry in

South Carolina grew throughout the 1920s. Mill owners improved living conditions in the mill villages by adding electricity and running water. However, they also tried to increase their profit by using methods such as the ‘speed-up’, where machines were set to run faster, and the ‘stretch-out’, where fewer workers were used to tend a larger number of machines. Workers were periodically laid off when demand decreased. These changes in the workplace led to some worker unrest but no significant protest. By the end of the 1920s, the textile industry, like agriculture, suffered from overproduction. Reductions in the work week led to reductions in income and had a ripple effect on the economy of South Carolina. People could not pay their debts. Banks were failing in South Carolina even before the stock market crash of 1929 marked the beginning of the Great Depression.

It is not essential for students to know

Although it would be helpful for students to know that the rest of the United States was enjoying a boom period in the 1920s, students do not need to know details about the specific economic conditions in other parts of the country. Students do not need to understand that overproduction was the result of an inability of many in the rest of the country to purchase goods because of low industrial wages. They do not need to understand that although installment buying helped to continue the consumer spending, it also left people with debts that they could not pay. The farmers’ plight was exacerbated by mortgages taken out during the profitable years that they could no longer pay after commodity prices fell.

Assessment guidelines:

Appropriate assessment require students to **summarize** the political, social and economic conditions in South Carolina in the post World War I era. Students should be able to **explain** the impact of the 19th amendment in South Carolina. Students should be able to **compare** economic conditions in the agricultural and industrial sectors of the South Carolina economy.